

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Previously Presented) An optical writing device, comprising:

a writing head including a plurality of light emitting portions aligned in an array for irradiating an exposure object with light, the writing head having opposite first and second ends;

a first support member supporting the first end of the writing head;

a second support member supporting the second end of the writing head; and

a connecting member interconnecting the first support member and the second support member while maintaining a positional relationship between the first support member and the second support member, the connecting member being formed of a material which is more easily deformable than any one of the first support member, the second support member, and the writing head.

2. (Previously Presented) The optical writing device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the connecting member further has a configuration which is more easily deformable than any one of the first support member, the second support member, and the writing head.

3-4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) The optical writing device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the first support member and the second support member are formed of a resin material, while the connecting member formed of a thin metal sheet.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus, comprising:

an optical writing device, and an image carrier as an exposure object disposed as facing the optical writing device;

the optical writing device, including,

a writing head including a plurality of light emitting portions aligned in an array for irradiating the exposure object with light, the writing head having opposite first and second ends,

a first support member supporting the first end of the writing head,

a second support member supporting the second end of the writing head, and

a connecting member interconnecting the first support member and the second support member while maintaining a positional relationship between the first support member and the second support member, the connecting member being formed of a material which is more easily deformable than any one of the first support member, the second support member and the writing head while also having a configuration which is more easily deformable than any one of the first support member, the second support member, and the writing head.

8. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus in accordance with claim 7, wherein

the first support member is provided with a first position adjustment member for moving the first end of the writing head toward and away from the image carrier, and

the second support member is provided with a second position adjustment member for moving the second end of the writing head toward and away from the image carrier,

the optical writing device further including,

a third position adjustment member for displacing the second end of the writing head in a direction parallel to a sheet feeding direction.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) The image forming apparatus in accordance with claim 8, wherein

the first support member, the second support member, and the connecting member constitute a support unit supporting the writing head,

the support unit further including manipulation members for use in position adjustment of the writing head by the first position adjustment member, the second position adjustment member, and the third position adjustment member, the manipulation members being exposed outside the support unit.